

Her Way, Part 1

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Summary: With the help of a holodeck character, Riker and Troi plot to bring the Captain and CMO together.

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By Karen Foy

Author's Note: The character Vic Fontaine comes from the DS9 episode "His

Way". He was played there by actor James Darren.

Timeline - This takes place after Insurrection, but before the season finale

of DS9.

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Trek. I merely claim this story.

"Computer begin program," Deanna Troi said as she entered the room. The

scene was a dinner club, complete with numerous human patrons enjoying their

dinners and the soft music that flowed from the stage. The band on the

stage was playing what Deanna recognized only as an old Earth ballad and a

handsome gray-haired singer held the attention of the audience.

"Amazing," Deanna said slowly as she was guided to her table by one of the

servers. Will would love this, she thought to herself. The singer was

quite mesmerizing as he sang the old love song, but what really amazed

Deanna was the way he related to the audience. At one point he looked

directly at her and his kind eyes had a way of grabbing at her heart, as if

he could see right through her.

At the end of the set, the singer talked informally with the audience for a

moment and then excused himself and his band from the stage for a few

minutes. But instead of making his way backstage, he headed into the

audience, smiling and shaking hands as he talked briefly with various diners

until he made his way deliberately to Deanna's table.

"Hi, how ya doin'? I hope you're enjoying the show," the man stated gently

as he offered Deanna his hand. "You haven't been here before, have you?" he

continued, looking directly into her dark eyes.

Deanna was stunned and intrigued. If she hadn't known better, she would

have sworn that this was a real person, not a holographically-generated

image. His manner was so casual and "knowing" in some way, as if he could

really read the feelings of the person he was talking with.

"No, I haven't, and yes, I am enjoying the show. I can see why this place

was recommended so highly. It just seems so "relaxed" in here,"

Deanna

answered.

"We aim to please. The name's Vic Fontaine, head crooner for this joint,

and you are ?"

"Deanna, Deanna Troi. It's nice to meet you Mr. Fontaine,"

"Please, call me Vic. So what brings a lovely lady like yourself to my

humble abode, especially without your beau on your arm?" Vic asked.

"Now, what makes you think I have a "beau", as you put it?" Deanna

inquired.

"Well, let's just say that I have a pretty good feel for people," Vic

answered. "So, why are you alone tonight. Is he on duty or something?"

"On duty, what do you mean?" Deanna was not in uniform, so why would Vic

think Will would be "on duty"?

"Well, aren't most of you guys on this ship in Starfleet?"

"On this ship!" Now Deanna was really confused. "How do you know we're on

a ship?"

"Well, this is the Enterprise, isn't it? At least that's what my program

tells me?"

Deanna just stared at him in surprise. She was not used to a hologram

responding in such a manner. Her face showed her concern.

"Don't worry, Deanna?" Vic smiled. "I'm harmless. This is just the way

Felix programmed me. I'll have to admit, it was a surprise to me at first

to find that I wasn't in 1962 Vegas anymore, or for that matter Deep Space

9. But it's still a good gig and you Federation people seem like a

pretty

good crowd."

"Worf told me to expect the unexpected, but I must say, I didn't expect

this," Deanna said with a smile.

"Worf!," Vic's eyebrows shot up. "How is the big guy." Vic paused for a

moment and then added softly. "I was really sorry to hear about what

happened to Jadzia. They were such a great couple. So, how's he getting

along?"

"As well as can be expected, I guess," Deanna said. "I saw him a couple of

weeks ago on the station. As a matter of fact, that's who sent me your

program."

"Well, I hope you enjoy it." Vic smiled and looked back to the stage.

"Look, it's been nice talking with you Deanna, but it looks like the crowd's

getting restless, so I better get back to work. Stop in again sometime, and

bring your friends. It's always great performing in front of new faces."

As Vic made his way back to the stage, Deanna got up to leave the holodeck.

"Wait until Will hears about this," she said to herself as she saved the

program.

"Troi to Riker," Deanna called on her combadge as she headed down the

corridor toward her quarters.

"Go ahead."

"Will, do you have a minute? I have something I'd like to talk to you

about." Deanna said.

"Sure Deanna, I'm just working on some stuff in my quarters. Come on over,"

Will replied. Riker smiled at the chance to spend some time with Deanna.

Their relationship had grown since their return from the Ba'ku homeworld a

few months before.

Deanna strode into Riker's quarters a few minutes later, the door sensing

her approach as it had been programmed to do, and gave the Commander a sweet

kiss and embrace.

"So, to what do I owe this welcomed respite from my reports?" Will said

with a smile after the kiss ended.

"I've just seen something truly amazing, Will," she said. "Worf sent me

this hologram program that they used on DS9 and I'll have to admit, I

expected something, you know, "Klingon", but this really threw me for a

loop."

Now Riker was intrigued. Worf's holodeck programs were something of a

legend aboard the Enterprise and they weren't usually Deanna's choice for

recreation. What could have her so excited.

"Okay, I'll bite," he said with a smile as he sat down on the sofa. "What's

got you so amazed?"

Deanna sat down next to him and continued. "Well, it's sort of hard to

explain. It's a nightclub from mid 20th century Earth. I think he said

something about Vegas. What's amazing is the main character. He's just so

... so real. I mean, you wouldn't know he was a hologram if no one

told

you. But, it's more than that, Will. He knows he's a hologram and on he

knows he's board this ship."

"Wait a minute, Deanna. What do you mean he knows he's a hologram?" This

conversation was getting serious. Their last encounter with a self-aware

hologram was with Professor Moriarty in Data's Sherlock Holmes mystery and

that adventure nearly destroyed the ship.

"I mean, he knows where he is, what year it is, everything." Deanna didn't

miss the concern in Riker's voice. "I know what you're thinking, Will. I

was concerned too at first, but I don't think he's a threat. He said his

programmer made him self-aware, and you know as well as I do that Worf

wouldn't have recommended him if he were a risk to security."

Riker's concern eased. He realized that Deanna was right. Worf would never

recommend a program that could be a threat, especially to Deanna.

"And there was something else. It's hard for me to put my finger on it, but

it's like he's empathic or something, like he's got some special insight

into people. I know, this sounds crazy, but with what Worf told me about

what happened on DS9, I'm beginning to understand what he meant."

"What do you mean, 'what happened on DS9'? Did Worf go to see him after

what happened to Jadzia?"

"No, it was before that, right after they were married. Dr. Bashir

convinced Worf and some of the others stationed there to visit the

program.

Do you remember Odo, the security chief?" Riker nodded and Deanna

continued. "Well, it seems that Odo had been secretly in love for years

with the Bajorian liaison, Kira, and that Vic helped the two of them finally

get together."

"Wait a minute, Deanna. How can a hologram help get two people together? I

mean, he can't actually plan things. That would take independent thought."

"I know. It sounds crazy, but this guy actually did it. He manipulated the

two of them into a situation where they couldn't ignore their feelings for

each other any longer." Deanna paused for a moment and then smiled at

Riker. "Remind you of anyone we know?"

"Okay, I see where you're going with this," Riker said with a smile. "You

just can't resist can you? But you know this whole thing could blow up in

your face."

"I know, but it's worth a try. You know they love each other Will. They

just need a little push in the right direction."

"Okay," Riker sighed. "What do you have in mind"?

Deanna cried out a triumphant yelp and kissed Riker fully on the lips. She

loved a little conspiracy.

After a couple of hours of "planning" with Riker, Deanna entered the

holodeck doors again to find Vic at his usual spot in front of the crowd.

He acknowledged her entrance with a nod and walked over to speak with her

after completing his song.

"Well, hello again, Deanna. I didn't expect to see you again so soon."

"Hello, Vic. Actually, I'd like to speak with you for a moment if you don't

mind."

"I never turn down a chance to speak with a lovely lady," he said,

indicating a table where they could talk. "What's on your mind? That fella

of yours giving you trouble?"

"Actually," Deanna said with a smile, "I just came from talking with Will

and we thought you might be able to help us with another situation. Worf

told me about what you did for Odo and Kira."

"Well, I just helped them follow their own hearts. They did the rest. So

what can I help you with?"

"There is a couple on this ship that have known each other for almost 30

years, but just can't seem to get it together, if you know what I mean. We

know they love each other, but each is afraid of losing their friendship if

they take their relationship further. So they keep hiding their true

feelings for each other."

Vic shook his head. "For crying out loud, don't any of you people in the

24th century know how to show someone you love them?"

Deanna laughed. After all, it had taken Will and her almost 15 years to

rekindle their romance.

"I know it seems that way, but we aren't usually this hopeless. Things

aboard a starship just seem to get in the way sometimes."

"Okay, fine. So who is this hopeless couple?"

Deanna paused a moment and took a deep breath. She knew there was no

turning back now.

"The Captain and Chief Medical Officer, Jean-Luc Picard and Beverly

Crusher."

"Wow, you are at the top of the heap now. So, what's their history? If

they love each other, what's keeping them apart?"

Deanna took the next few minutes to fill Vic in on what she knew of the

Captain and Beverly's relationship, beginning with a brief history of their

youth. She told him about how they first met 30 years ago, the Captain's

friendship with Beverly's husband, Jack, how Jack had died under Picard's

command, and Beverly's assignment aboard the Enterprise years later. She

explained her empathic perceptions of them when they were together, how each

of them had had other relationships along the way and how those

relationships had hurt the other party, though neither one of them would

admit it. Deanna concluded with a explanation of their relationship as it

stood now, a few months after Picard had met Anij on Ba'ku.

"Now, wait a minute, Deanna. Maybe your Captain has moved on with his life

and wants to pursue his relationship with this Ba'ku woman."

"I thought about that Vic, but I don't think that's the real situation. I

still feel the Captain's deep emotions when he's around Beverly. He's

afraid of another rejection and I think he feels that Anij is just safer.

And I know that Beverly's feelings haven't changed, although, I'll have to

admit, she was hurt by his relationship with Anij."

"So you think they just need a little encouragement to get on the right

track?"

"Exactly. So what do you think?" Deanna queried, still a little amazed she

was sharing all this with a hologram, let alone asking for his advice.

"Let me roll it over for a little while. In the meantime, why don't you see

if you can get Beverly to pay me a visit? You said she was a dancer in med

school, right?"

Deanna nodded.

"Well, come up with something that will intrigue the dancer in her or

something." Vic paused for a moment. "And, don't tell her I'm a hologram,

okay. Tell her I'm a visiting singer and just use this program in my act."

A small smile crept across Deanna's face. This guy is good, she thought.

"Okay, but may I ask what do you have in mind?" she asked.

"You just leave the details to 'Uncle' Vic and get your doctor to pay me a

visit around seven o'clock tonight."

Deanna's mind was already racing when she exited the program. Now all she

had to do was come up with a way to get Beverly to the holodeck.

"Deanna, I really don't have time for this," Beverly pleaded from behind

her desk. Deanna had been trying for the past 15 minutes to convince

Beverly that she needed a break and a visit to the holodeck would do wonders

for her.

"Beverly, I think you would really like this program. It's a dance club and

I know how much you like to dance. Besides, we all need a little relaxation

every once and a while."

"So what's so great about this group anyway."

"To begin with, it's not a group. He's a singer who uses the holodeck as a

re-creation of a 1960's Las Vegas show. And second, it's a lot of fun.

Besides, he's a great singer and not at all bad to look at. I really think

you should meet him."

"Deanna, I don't ..." Beverly started, but was cut off.

"Listen, Beverly. Just give it a try. What harm could it do? You might

even enjoy it."

Beverly sighed. She knew Deanna would not let up until she agreed.

"Okay, fine. I'll come by for a little while. What did you say this guy's

name was again?"

"Vic Fontaine. The show starts at 19:00 hours in Holodeck 3. Don't be late

and wear something other than your uniform. This is a classy place and it's

supposed to be fun."

"Right," Beverly sighed. "Fun. Okay, I'll be there."

Beverly strode into the holodeck at 19:10 expecting to see some of the other

Enterprise crew since the program was already playing. She was a little

surprised that she didn't recognize anyone in the crowd and there were no

uniforms to be seen. A hostess approached her as the doors closed and she

was seated at a table near the bar.

Deanna was right about one thing, she thought. The atmosphere was relaxing.

A man on the stage, whom she figured with Vic Fontaine, was singing an old

Earth tune. As he neared the end of the song, he looked directly at Beverly

and smiled sweetly.

Beverly was taken aback a little. There were plenty of other people in the

crowd, but he had, quite noticeably, singled her out with his gaze. She

also had to admit that Deanna had been right about another thing. He was

quite handsome.

When the song ended, Vic excused himself from the stage as the band behind

him continued to play low.

He made his way through the crowd, stopping occasionally to chat with

members of the audience, until he was standing right in front of her table.

"Good evening. I'm Vic Fontaine. You must be Beverly," he said softly as

he extended his hand towards her.

"Hello," she said, accepting his hand in hers.

Vic could see the confusion in her eyes as he continued to hold her hand.

"Deanna told me to look for a beautiful redhead, but I must say she didn't

do you justice," he said before raising her hand to his lips and kissing it

gently.

Beverly just smiled. She had to admit, this guy was smooth. "Thank

you,"

she replied.

"Mind if I join you? I've been on that stage for a while and would enjoy

the company for a moment."

"Of course, sit down Mr. Fontaine," she said, indicating the chair across

from her. Beverly was usually shy around people that she didn't know, but

somehow she felt completely comfortable around this man.

"Everyone calls me Vic. So, Deanna says you're a doctor aboard the ship.

How long have you been traveling among the stars?"

She laughed gently. "Most of my life really, one way or another. How about

you? Does your tour take you from ship to ship most of the time?"

"No, not really," he said with a smile. "This is my first starship, though

I did do a gig on Deep Space 9 not too long ago."

"Really? I know a few people on the station. Did you stay long?"

"Not too long, but enough about me. I'd like to find out more about the

real Beverly Crusher. Tell me, how is it a beautiful lady like yourself

comes to my joint without some handsome guy on your arm?"

Beverly surprised herself as a smile crept across her lips. His line of

questioning would have seemed offensive if asked by someone else, but she

instinctively felt she could trust this man, as if she had known him for

years.

"What makes you think he's not going to join me later?" Beverly was

beginning to enjoy their flirtatious game.

"I think he must be a fool not to. But then again, maybe he's just not sure

he'd be welcomed?"

Beverly was taken aback again. "You seem to have me at a disadvantage, Mr.

Fontaine," she smiled sadly, a little uncomfortable for the first time that

evening. "It seems Deanna has told you all about me, but I know very little

about you."

"Deanna didn't have to tell me anything, Beverly. That look in your eyes

just now told me everything I need to know." There was a gentleness in

Vic's eyes and voice that calmed Beverly's uneasiness.

She smiled weakly and took a drink of wine that a waiter had placed there a

few moments before.

"Am I that transparent?" she said slowly.

"No, let's just say that I've seen the look before." He paused for a

moment. "So, why haven't you told him how you feel?"

Beverly laughed nervously. "I'm not sure it would make a difference

anymore."

"Don't be so sure of that. It's hard for a man to resist a woman who's in

love with him, that is, if he knows she's in love with him."

Beverly laughed nervously. "He's done a pretty good job of it lately," she

said, taking a long drink from her glass.

"Well, you know what they say, 'a bird in the hand'." He didn't finish the

old saying as he caught her gaze and held it for a few moments. He could

see that Beverly understood his meaning.

"So what you're saying is I should just waltz in there and tell him

how I

feel?" Beverly said shakily and paused for a few moments. "It's just not

that easy between us."

"You told me, didn't you?" When she didn't respond, Vic continued.
"Look,

Beverly, it's never going to get any easier, but maybe I can help a little.

Have dinner with me later this evening, after my show is over.
Maybe

together we can come up with something."

Vic could see the hesitation in her eyes. This was going to take a little

more work than he had first imagined. "What was it with these people?" he

said to himself.

He leaned in a little closer to her and took one of her hands in his own.

"You Starfleet types do eat don't you," he teased. "Come on, it could be

fun. We don't have to talk about anything you don't want to. We could just

have a nice dinner, a bottle of the house's best champagne, maybe even dance

the night away. I've been told you're a pretty good dancer and I'll make it

a point not to step on your toes."

Beverly looked into his eyes. Vic was quite charming and, at another time,

she could have been swept away by this man.

He still sensed her apprehension and didn't want to mislead her.

"Beverly, look at me," he paused until she looked into his eyes and smiled

sadly. "I'm not a fool, Beverly. I know where I stand, but I would enjoy

the company and I have a feeling you could use it too. I'll even invite

Will and Deanna. Just say you'll come."

She smiled at him. He truly did understand her and wanted nothing more from

her than to enjoy her company.

"I'd love to," she said softly.

"Great," he said, standing. "Listen, I have some work to do backstage.

Running a show is more than just song and dance, you know," he said,

grinning. "I'll be done about nine o'clock and I'll reserve us the best

seat in the house. Okay?"

"Okay. And Vic," she paused a moment. "Thanks for understanding."

He grinned widely. "That's what I specialize in."

After Beverly left the holodeck. Vic asked the computer for Troi's

location.

"Deanna?" he called over a communications channel after patching it through

to her quarters.

Deanna sat up stiffly from her position on the sofa. "Vic, is that you?

How are you contacting me?"

"Just a little trick I learned on Deep Space Nine," he replied. "Listen,

Deanna, I'm meeting Beverly for dinner tonight at nine o'clock and I"

"Dinner tonight?" she cut him off. "I thought you were meeting her at

19:00."

"I did. She just left, but I need a little more time with her if we're

going to pull this off. And I need you there too, and Will."

"Okay Vic, but I'm confused, what do you need from us."

"I think it will make Beverly more comfortable. Besides, it'll be fun. A

little dinner, a little dancing, maybe even a little romancing, ya know what

I mean."

"Wait a minute Vic. Don't carry this thing too far. Remember, Beverly

doesn't know you're a hologram. I don't want her to get hurt."

"I know Deanna. Trust me. Beverly and I talked all about it. You were

right, she's really hooked on the guy. I wouldn't stand a chance if I

tried."

"Okay, but what's the plan. What are Will and I supposed to do?"

"You just follow my lead. Oh, and one more thing."

"I'm almost afraid to ask," she answered. Deanna wondered what his next

request would be.

"Make sure the Captain drops in around nine-fifteen. And remember, dresses

for the gals and tuxes for the guys. This is a classy joint. Okay,

Deanna?"

Deanna agreed reluctantly. She wasn't sure how she was going to get the

Captain there. Perhaps, Will could help, she thought.

A few minutes later, she and Will were discussing the plan in his quarters.

"I don't know, Deanna. Maybe we should back off from this for now. It's

really none of our business."

"Will Riker, I'm surprised at you," she scolded him. "Beverly and the

Captain are both our friends and this is for their own good. You know they

belong together, they've just gotten "sidetracked" for a little while,

that's all. And don't tell me not to get involved. They're our friends, so

we're already involved."

Riker sat silently on the sofa for a few moments, contemplating what the

Captain, or Beverly for that matter, would do to them if they ever found out

about their little scheme. He had to admit, the thought of his Captain and

CMO finally getting together did have its appeal. They were his friends and

he wanted them to be happy. He didn't have to be an empath to know that

they loved each other deeply, or at least, they could if they were given the

right opportunity. Right, he said to himself, we're not manipulating them;

we're just giving them an opportunity. A small smile on his face grew into

a wide grin with this realization.

"Okay, but if this backfires, it was all your idea," he said, taking Deanna

in his arms.

"I take full responsibility," she answered, kissing him fully on the lips.

"So, can you take care of getting the Captain there?"

"I think I can come up with something," he grinned.

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